



Fact Sheet

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control • www.scdhec.gov

Mosquitoes

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| <p>Are mosquitoes a problem in the South Carolina Lowcountry?</p> | <p>Mosquitoes and other flying insects can be a terrible nuisance in our area. In addition to the man-made habitats such as bird baths, drainage ditches and clogged gutters, we have abundant natural habitats such as marshes, ponds, and swamps that promote breeding. We also have a mild climate and humid conditions, which allows them to thrive almost year round. There are varieties of mosquitoes that breed in saltwater, and some that breed in fresh water. There are varieties that bite during the day, and some that bite at dusk and dawn.</p> <p>Besides the irritating bites, mosquitoes can sometimes carry disease. In this area mosquitoes carry heartworm for dogs and, occasionally, West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis and St. Louis Encephalitis. However, very few mosquitoes carry diseases that can infect people and the risk of becoming sick is very small. And we are not at any more risk that anywhere else in the country.</p> |
| <p>How are mosquito bites treated?</p> | <p>The bites of mosquitoes are most often just a nuisance that cause itching and swelling as an allergic reaction to the saliva of the mosquito. In most cases the itching and swelling subsides within several hours. Some people may be highly sensitive to bites and the symptoms may last several days. These symptoms can usually be treated with over-the-counter antihistimine medications.</p> <p>In rare situations a mosquito bite can transmit certain diseases such as West Nile Virus. Anyone who experiences fever, neck stiffness, numbness or nausea should see a doctor.</p> |
| <p>What can be done to prevent mosquito bites?</p> | <p>The best ways to prevent mosquito bites are to wear insect repellent, get rid of standing water, wear long sleeve shirts and avoid being outdoors during the most frequent feeding times at dawn, dusk and early evening.</p> |
| <p>What insect repellents are most effective?</p> | <p>Products containing these active ingredients typically provide longer lasting protection than others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide). For children use products with 15% DEET, for adults use 30% - Picaridin (KBR 3023) - Oil of lemon eucalyptus, a plant derived active ingredient, is also registered with the EPA. Some studies have shown that this ingredient is as effective as low concentrations of DEET. Although "Pure" oil of lemon of eucalyptus (essential oil) has not received validation testing. For children under the age of 3, don't use the lemon eucalyptus repellents - Certain products containing permethrin are good to use on clothing, shoes, camping gear. Never apply repellents with permethrin to skin. |

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Region 7

Serving Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties

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